

# HIKING TRAIL



INCREASING USE ON THE NORTH COUNTRY SCENIC TRAIL  
THROUGH THE  
ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

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RECREATION SHORT COURSE PROJECT

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ON THE  
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Title: Increasing Use on the North Country Trail Through the Allegheny National Forest

Abstract: The North Country Trail is part of the National Trails System and it will extend 3200 miles from New York to North Dakota when completed. While use continues to increase on many hiking trails and trends show more demand for hiking and backpacking trails, use of the 93 miles of NCT within the ANF has not increased significantly in the last decade. The report traces the history of the trail and examines factors that contributed to the current situation. It also describes popular hiking trails in the area and lists important attributes of these trails that can be used to identify shortcomings of the North Country Trail. A set of recommended improvements in the NCT trail system on the Forest can be accomplished as part of Forest Plan implementation to bring the trail setting in line with hiker's preferences.

KEY WORDS: North Country Trail, Hiking, Hiker Preferences



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## A. Introduction

### 1. Background

The backbone of the hiking trail system on the Allegheny National Forest in Northwestern Pennsylvania is the North Country Trail (NCT). Approximately 93 miles of this trail, which is part of the National Scenic Trail System, cross the Forest in a generally North-South direction. (See figure 1.) When completed, the NCT will provide 3,200 miles of continuous hiking between eastern New York State and the Lewis and Clark Trail in North Dakota. (See figure 2.)

For people who have hiked trails in the Northeast, one of the striking things about the NCT is the condition of the tread--many sections show almost no sign of wear and tear. In the late fall and early spring when light snows blanket the ground, days or even weeks can go by without a single set of footprints to show any use of the trail. Even during the busy summer recreation season, it is rare to see more than 1 or two cars parked at roadside trail heads.

### 2. What's the Problem?

Use of most other hiking trails in the Northeast has followed National trends which have shown hiking use to be steadily increasing.<sup>1,2</sup> The Susquehannock Trail is a hiking trail on Pennsylvania State Forest land two hours east of the Allegheny National Forest. (See figure 3.) Over the past 10 years, use on this trail has steadily increased to the point where hikers find themselves in competition for the better camping spots.<sup>3</sup> The Appalachian Trail crosses southeastern Pennsylvania five hours east of the Allegheny National Forest. (See figure 3.) The more popular sections of this trail receive so much use that the tread is more like a road than a trail. Also, other trails on the ANF are much more heavily used than the NCT.

It can be argued that the Appalachian Trail is located near the eastern population centers, so the demand and use is higher because there are more people to draw from. However, the Susquehannock Trail is in one of the more remote sections of the mid-Atlantic states and its use has also increased. Furthermore, the ANF is estimated to be within a day's drive of 93 million people<sup>4</sup> in cities like Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland and even Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington, D.C. So, there should be no shortage of people to be hiking the North Country Trail.

### 3. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is:

- a. To identify the factors that may be limiting hiking use on the NCT on the ANF.
- b. To focus on the factors that relate to the physical characteristics of the trail, and
- c. To recommend ways that managers on the ANF can change or enhance these characteristics to improve the hiking experience and increase use on the NCT. The results are intended to be used as a guide during Opportunity Area Analysis<sup>5</sup> for identifying trail-related recreation projects to carry out the Forest Plan.



# General Route of the North Country Trail

Across the

Allegheny National Forest

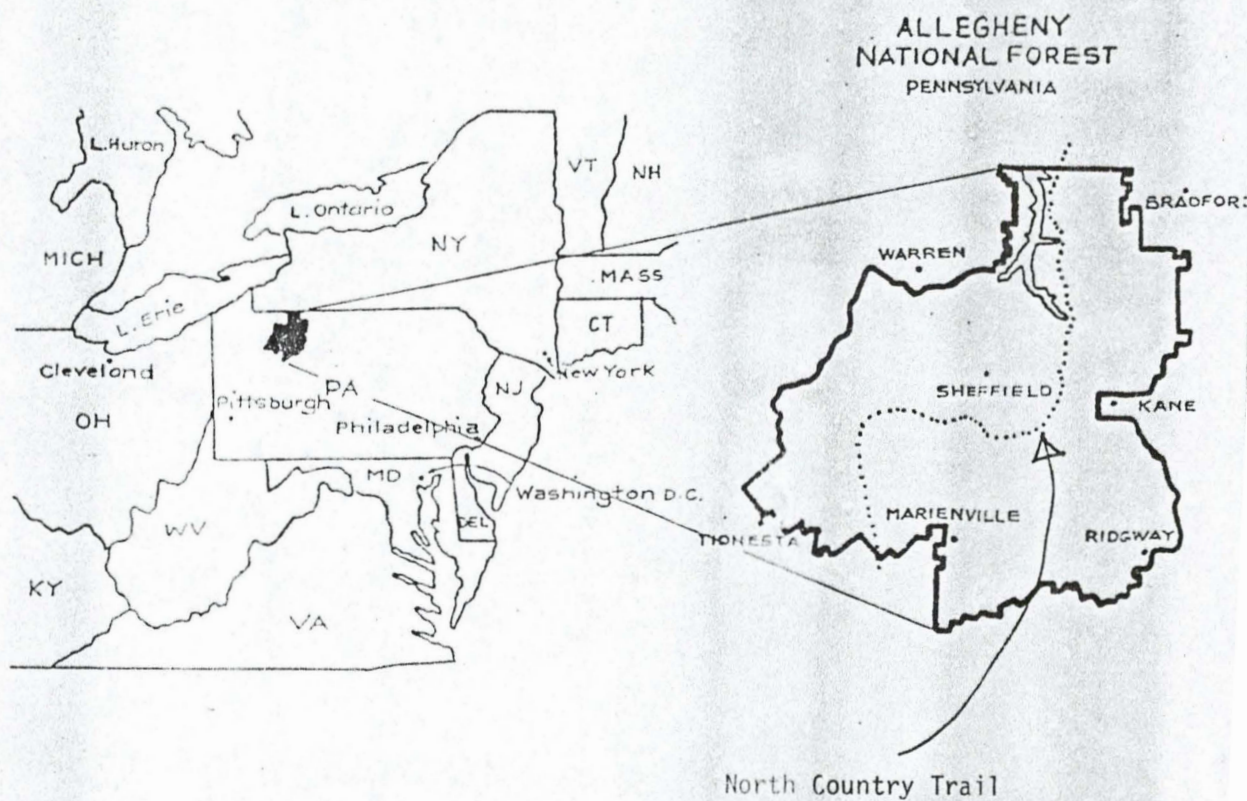


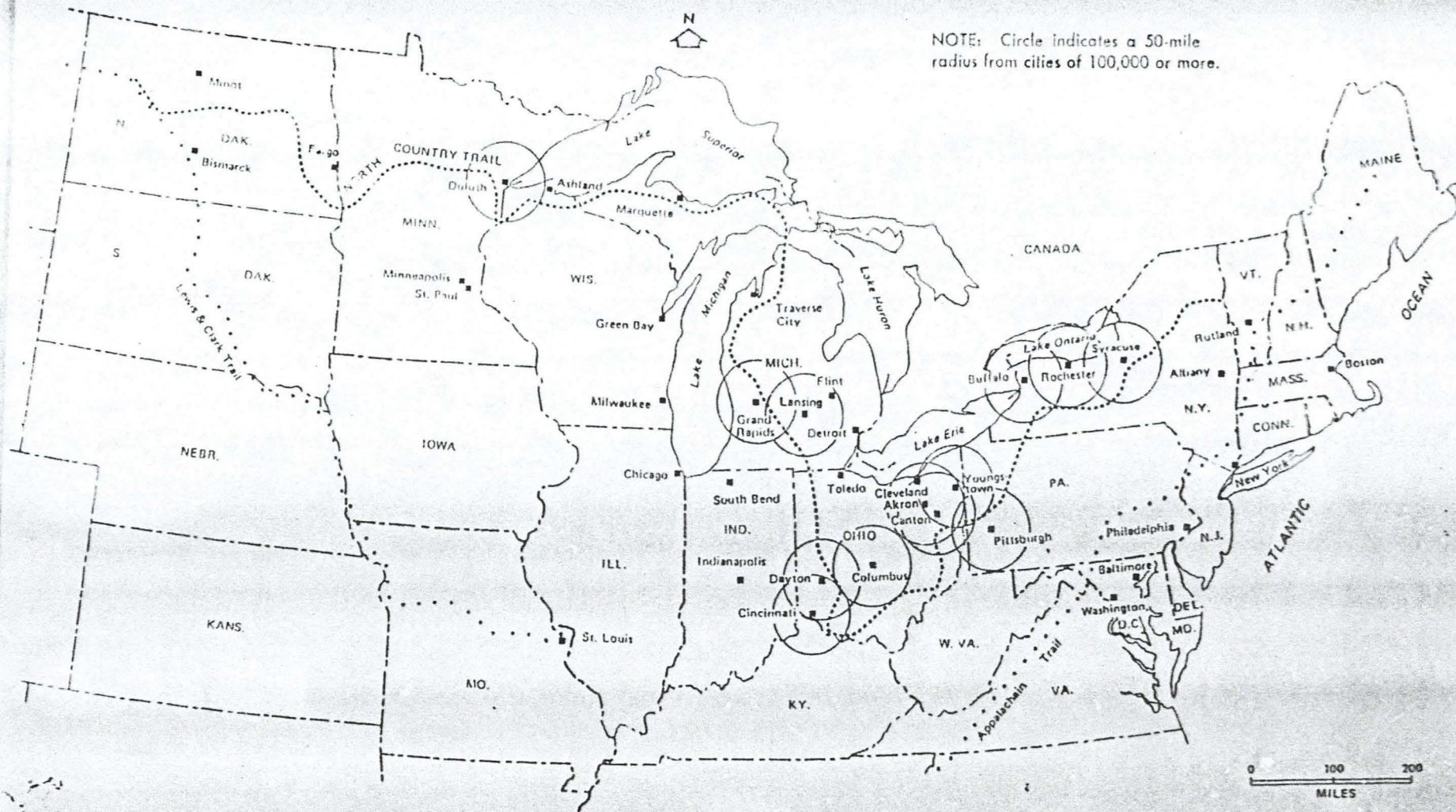
FIGURE 1



ROUTE OF THE  
3200 MILE NORTH  
COUNTRY TRAIL

NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL

NOTE: Circle indicates a 50-mile  
radius from cities of 100,000 or more.





APPALACHIAN TRAIL AND SUSQUEHANNOCK TRAIL  
IN PENNSYLVANIA

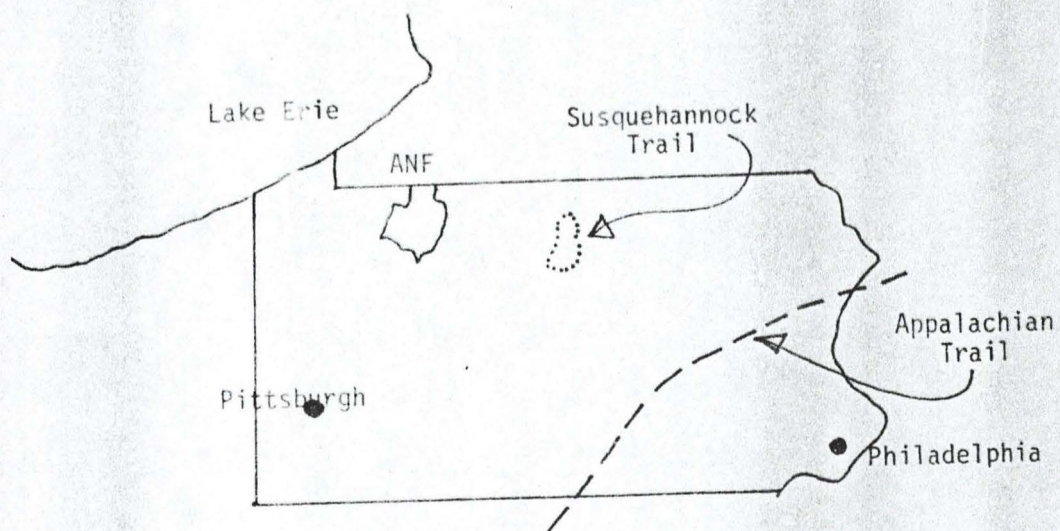


FIGURE 3



## B. History of the North Country Trail - Studies, Reports, and Legislation

### 1. Preliminary Recommendations

In the 1960's, many of the values held by Americans were being tested and re-examined. One of these values was our awareness and appreciation for the natural environment. National Forests and Parks were seen as places to go to escape most of the undesirable, artificial aspects of society, and hiking and backpacking were the means of getting out into these natural havens.

The demand for hiking trails began to skyrocket and in response to this, the Forest Service completed a "Nationwide System of Trails Study" in 1965. The concept of a "Northern Country Trail" was first proposed in that report. The following year, the Department of Interior published a report entitled "Trails for America" which included the proposal for a "North Country Trail." The thinking in both of these study reports was to link the Appalachian Trail with the Lewis and Clark Trail. The route would take hikers through a diversity of northern landscapes extending from Vermont to North Dakota.

### 2. North Country Trail Legislation

The Forest Service and Department of Interior study reports set the stage for the passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968. This Act designated the Pacific Crest and Appalachian Trails as National Scenic Trails. The North Country Trail was one of 14 other trail routes identified in the Act for further study as potential additions to the National Trails System.

The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (which became the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in 1978 and part of the Park Service in 1981) coordinated the study of the North Country Trail and published a conceptual study report in 1975. This report recommended that Congress authorize the NCT as a National Scenic Trail and identified a 10 mile wide planning corridor for the route. The report also recommended that motorized use, particularly snowmobiling, should be permitted on some sections of the trail.

In 1980, the North Country Trail was formally established by Congress as a National Scenic Trail (see Appendix). As it was enacted, the North Country Scenic Trail would have no motorized use and it extended only into eastern New York, falling short of its intended connection with the Long and Appalachian Trails in Vermont.

## C. Bringing the Studies and Legislation Down to Earth

### 1. Early Trail System on the ANF

In response to the increased demand for hiking trails in the early 1960's, the ANF had begun to develop short loop trails as well as longer cross-Forest hiking trails. The Recreation Management Plan for the Forest, which was approved in 1974, attempted to portray how these trails would fit together as a system and accommodate the North Country Trail. The NCT route as it was depicted in this plan became the corridor across the ANF when the trail was formally designated in 1980.



## 2. Criteria for Completing the Trail

The 1974 Recreation Management Plan for the ANF did not go into detail about how the NCT route would be located on the ground beyond identifying a two mile wide corridor. It stated that the corridors "have been located to take best advantage of existing ownerships and topography. The corridors are also located to be most complementary to other Forest uses and to provide the best long range use pattern for the Forest."<sup>6</sup>

With this fairly general direction, recreation personnel on the Forest set out to complete the path that would become a National Scenic Trail. During reconnaissance of possible trail routes, personnel were encouraged to look for old railroad grades, logging roads and jeep trails that could be connected to quickly complete many miles of trail at almost no cost.<sup>7</sup> On some of the last sections of the NCT to be completed, it was estimated that up to 75% of the trail followed these old clearings through the woods.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. Major Re-locations

As was mentioned earlier, the NCT corridor identified in the Forest's 1974 Recreation Management Plan became the final route. However, prior to 1974, a 20 mile section of the original NCT route was targeted for relocation to eliminate "trails that now run parallel to each other."<sup>8</sup> Another reason for relocating this section of trail was because use by the Off-Road Vehicles had become a problem.<sup>7</sup> Portions of this old NCT route have since been incorporated into an authorized ORV trail.

Other relocations of the NCT have occurred in recent years to take the trail off roads or to avoid oil and gas activity, but these have generally involved only a few hundred feet of trail. They have not gone outside the corridor identified in the North Country Scenic Trail Act signed in 1980.

## D. Inherent Problems With the NCT

As the concept of a North Country Trail went through various studies and finally into legislation, a number of problems developed along the way. Most of these problems resulted from compromises that had to be made in order for the North Country National Scenic Trail to become a reality. Others were caused by external factors that might have been predicted, but could not have been prevented. A final group of problems were due in part to the specific location of the trail as it crossed the ANF. Understanding all these problems is the first step toward deciding how to increase use of the NCT on the Forest.

### 1. Status Problems

a. No link to the Appalachian Trail - The National Trails System Act of 1968 and all the studies which led to the passage of that Act intended for the NCT to connect the Lewis and Clark Trail in North Dakota with the Appalachian Trail in Vermont. During the preparation of the study report required by the National Trails System Act, the State of Vermont strongly objected to the proposed NCT, especially the section in Vermont that would link up to the Appalachian Trail. Their reason was that Vermont was already being "loved to death" by hikers on the Appalachian and Long Trails. They also disagreed with the establishment of a 200 foot wide right-of-way for the trail which could conceivably be used by motorized vehicles.



The connecting link in Vermont was consequently dropped from the study report and not included when the Trail was designated in the Act of 1980. This move undoubtedly cost the NCT a tremendous amount of status that it would have enjoyed as a partner with the Appalachian Trail.

b. Scenic or Recreational, Motorized or Non-motorized - The NCT study report which followed the National Trails System Act of 1968 concluded that the trail could have two types of designation. Some portions could be designated "scenic", permitting no motorized use, while other portions could be "National Recreational Trails" where motorized use, particularly snowmobiling, would be possible.

When the bill designating the NCT was passed in 1980, there was no allowance for motorized use. However, the earlier recommendations to allow some motorized use may have lowered the status of the trail in many hikers' minds and created doubts about how public agencies might manage this new trail.

c. Only Sections on Public Land Designated - The original concept of the NCT as it was developed in early studies envisioned a mostly public right-of-way for the entire length of the trail. This thinking was brought forward into the 1968 Trails System Act which contained the authorities for taking the traditional Federal acquisition, development, and management approach to National trails. However, the 1980 Act which established the NCT only designated segments located within the boundaries of federally administered areas. This amounted to approximately 800 miles or 25% of the trail length.

The remaining 75% of the NCT would only be added if State or local governments or private interests applied to the Secretary of Interior to have segments added. These segments could only be added if they met the criteria established in the National Trails System Act and if the sponsoring agencies or interests agreed to administer them at no cost to the United States. What could be more damaging to the status of a cross-country trail, than to legislate that 75% of its length would have to be developed and managed by potentially hundreds of State and local government agencies and private interests?

## 2. Identity Problems - Which Trail is This?

By necessity, the NCT system followed existing, locally popular trails for much of its length. This was the case on the ANF where a major portion of the Tanbark Trail was absorbed by the larger NCT system. This has created confusion because many maps of the NCT have retained the original names of trails, as well as the new NCT designation. On some public land such as Cook Forest State Park in Pennsylvania, and the Chequamegon National Forest in Wisconsin, some maps available to the public don't identify the route of the NCT. They do show segments of the NCT, but these are only identified by their local name.

This situation has been aggravated by the fact that the connecting links of trail across primarily private land have not been completed. The result is that individual sections of the NCT across public land have kept their separate identities and the NCT's identity as a cross-country trail has not developed.



### 3. Hiking Through the Foundry

In his book, The Nine Nations of North America, Joel Garreau refers to the area of the United States encompassing the ANF as "The Foundry."<sup>10</sup> It is an area where people's values have tended to be centered around the steel industry, coal mining, and auto manufacturing. The natural environment and particularly forested lands are viewed by many people from "the Foundry" as a place providing raw materials for heavy industry or commodities like lumber and venison. Unlike New England and other parts of the Appalachian chain, walking through a mostly natural environment simply for "re-creational" reasons has not been an important part of people's culture. So, even though large numbers of potential hikers are within a day's drive of the NCT on the ANF, only a small percentage have been interested in taking advantage of the hiking opportunity.

### 4. Take a Hike Through the Pennsylvania Oil Fields!

The Allegheny National Forest is located in the heart of the Pennsylvania oil fields. As oil prices began to rise in the latter half of the 1970's, the Forest began to experience an increase in oil well drilling. The drilling peaked in 1981 and remained at a high level for 2 more years. Many miles of oil lease roads were built on the Forest during this period and oil spills from broken pipelines or overflowing storage tanks occasionally occurred. The news media and several outdoor magazines began to carry the story that the ANF was more like a "National Oilfield" than a National Forest (see figure 4), and that many of the streams were polluted from oil spills. Some stories were true, but many were exaggerated.

This flurry of activity and media attention occurred during the first three years after the NCT Act was passed. It is very likely that the negative publicity the ANF received during these years reduced use of the trail by people looking for a nice place to hike in a relatively undisturbed woods.<sup>11</sup> Most of the trail was not affected by drilling, but that didn't matter; an image had been created by some of the media, and the NCT probably suffered during these years because of that image.

### 5. Criteria for Selecting the Trail Route

It was mentioned earlier in Section C.2 that the NCT corridor on the ANF was "located to take best advantage of existing ownerships and topography" and also "to be most complementary to other Forest uses." Another criteria for its location was "to provide the best long range use pattern for the Forest."<sup>6</sup> Eight years after this direction was included in the Forest's 1974 Recreation Management Plan, the Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of the North Country National Scenic Trail was published by the National Park Service. It provides the following guidelines for locating new sections of the trail:

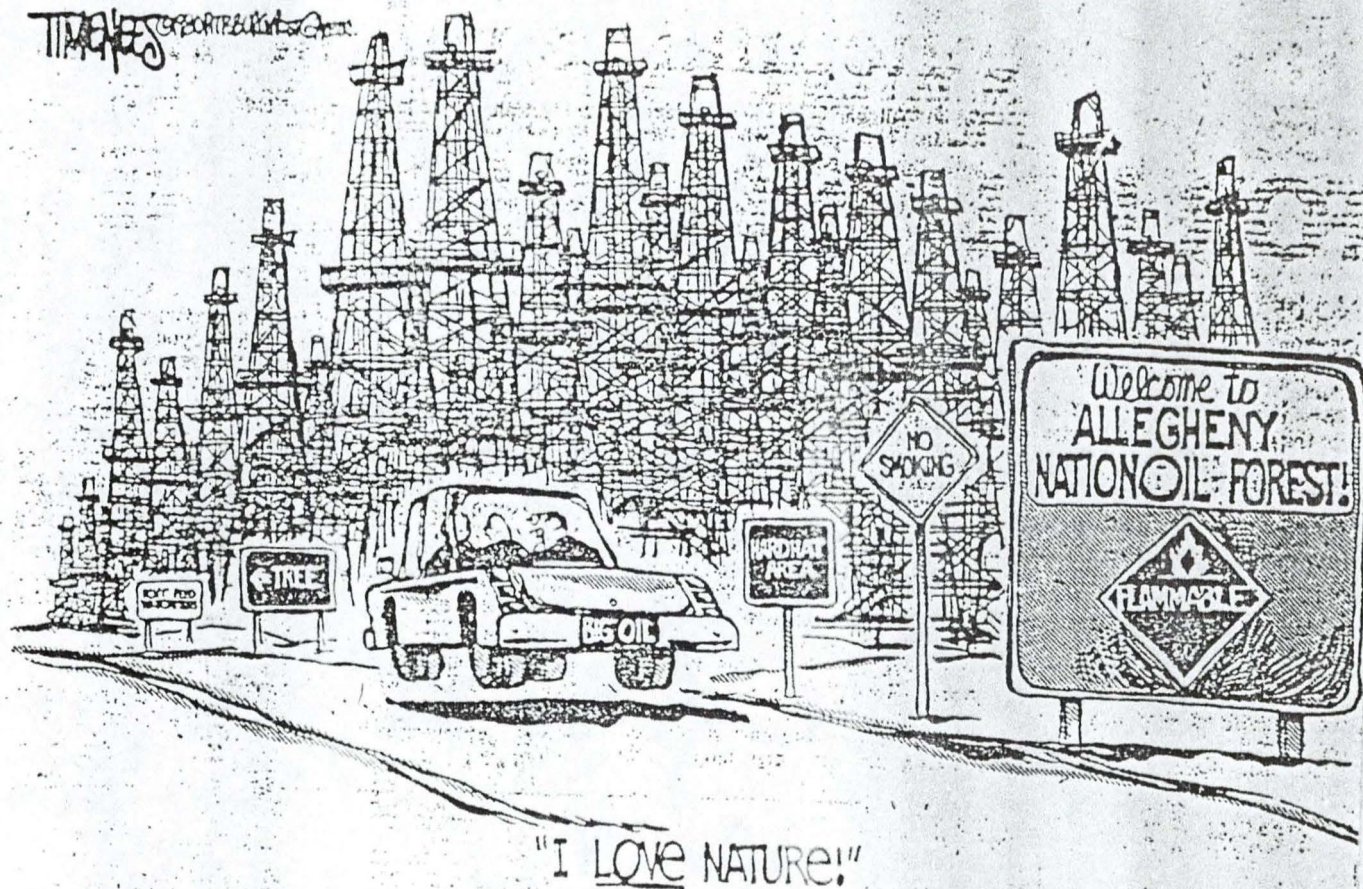
- a. It will take users through and to a diversity of landscapes and nationally significant scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational features.
- b. Sufficient access to the trail should be provided.
- c. The trail route should take advantage of existing public recreation sites that provide support facilities like water and camping, trailheads and toilets.



Redford

# Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1980





- d. The route may not be located on or along roads open to motorized use by the public.

There is a paradox with the original criteria from the 1974 Recreation Plan and these latter guidelines. Early emphasis on the location of the NCT route was to use existing trails as much as possible. This was to assure that the maximum length of trail would be ready for designation when the NCT bill was enacted. The ANF was ready for passage of the bill in 1980, with 93 miles of trail already identified from one end of the Forest to the other. The paradox is that the guidelines for locating new sections of trail were not published until two years after the trail was officially added to the National Trails system. Does this mean there were different sets of standards for sections of the NCT located prior to enactment of the NCT bill and those sections to be added later? It appears so in some cases.

The ANF did a commendable job of choosing a route for the NCT that avoided the need for new rights-of-way or major bridges. However, when the guidelines published after the trail was located and designated are reviewed, several significant shortcomings become apparent. These shortcomings are explained below and correspond to guidelines (a) through (d) which are listed above.

- a. The ANF is located entirely on a landform known as the Allegheny plateau. For major sections of the trail located on the plateau, the vegetation and topography do not vary much and neither does the landscape along the NCT. Also, the only nationally significant features along the trail are the Tionesta Scenic Area, which is a stand of virgin timber, and the Allegheny Reservoir.
- b. The NCT crosses 11 all-weather roads as it passes through the Forest. However, only two of these roads, U.S. Route 6 and State Route 59 are primary travelways. The other crossings are on relatively remote sections of secondary roads.
- c. It is in the area of support facilities that the ANF's portion of the NCT fares the poorest. The trail goes through only one supply point for the entire 93 miles. This is the village of Kellettsville, and the supplies it can provide are very limited. There are three campgrounds along the trail, and all are concentrated near the north end around the Allegheny Reservoir. A fourth camping area operated by the Army Corps of Engineers was located along the south end of the trail. It was destroyed by a tornado in 1985 and is not currently open.
- d. There are no problems with the NCT following public roads on the ANF. The original layout avoided roads except where it was necessary to use highway bridges over a major stream.

## E. Is There Any Hope for the North Country Trail?

### 1. Indicators of Hiking Demand

With all the NCT's inherent shortcomings, what guarantee is there that we can somehow increase its use? There are no guarantees, but there are good indicators that the demand for hiking trails is there. All we must do is to provide the setting for the experience people are seeking.



The first indicator is that studies of recreation trends show hiking as one of the fastest growing activities on National Forest land from 1966 to 1985.<sup>1</sup> Also, backpacking is likely to continue to see increased participation because of its appeal to baby boomers and its availability to a broad economic segment of the population.<sup>2</sup>

A second and equally important indicator is that certain trails or segments of trails in northern Pennsylvania are being heavily used. These include the Hickory Creek, Minister Valley, and Rimrock Morrison Trails on the ANF, as well as the Susquehannock Trail on nearby State Forest land. These trails are popular during all seasons of the year, and are very heavily used on holiday weekends.

## 2. Popular Trails on or Near the ANF

The trails mentioned above have several important attributes that contribute to their popularity. The following is a brief description of each trail highlighting its main attractions.

a. Hickory Creek Trail - This is an 11 mile loop trail located entirely within the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area. The northern half of the loop is located mainly on the level plateau, while the southern half climbs in and out of several small stream valleys where the woods are fairly open. Side trips off the main trail and along the open stream valleys are popular. The trailhead is at a campground/picnic area with a well-maintained parking lot. A map of this and the next two trails on the ANF is shown in figure 5.

b. Minister Valley Trail - This is the most heavily-used hiking trail on the ANF. It is famous for its spectacular rock formations, overlooks and open camping spots along Minister Creek, a native trout stream. The trailhead is at a parking lot next to the Minister Creek Campground. The Minister Valley trail uses a portion of the NCT to complete a loop of approximately seven miles.

c. Rimrock-Morrison Trail - The terrain along this 11 mile loop trail is generally steep. It winds through several rock formations and a variety of interesting vegetation including mountain laurel, stands of hemlock, and large hardwoods. The trailhead is along State Route 59 and includes a parking lot for 20 cars. The trail is also accessible by boat at Morrison Campground on the Allegheny Reservoir.

d. Susquehannock Trail - Located on Pennsylvania State Forest land, this is an 85 mile long loop trail. One of the most popular features of this trail is the abundance of side trails which make shorter or longer loop hikes possible. The terrain varies from flat plateau top to broad open stream valleys with numerous beaver dams. There are two main trailheads along State highways and the trail passes through two State Parks and Picnic Areas.

## 3. Attributes of Popular Trails

The following is a summary of the most important features common to the four trails described above.

a. Loops - All these trails provide loops so that there is no need to shuttle vehicles. There is also no back-tracking required.



# ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST LOOP TRAILS

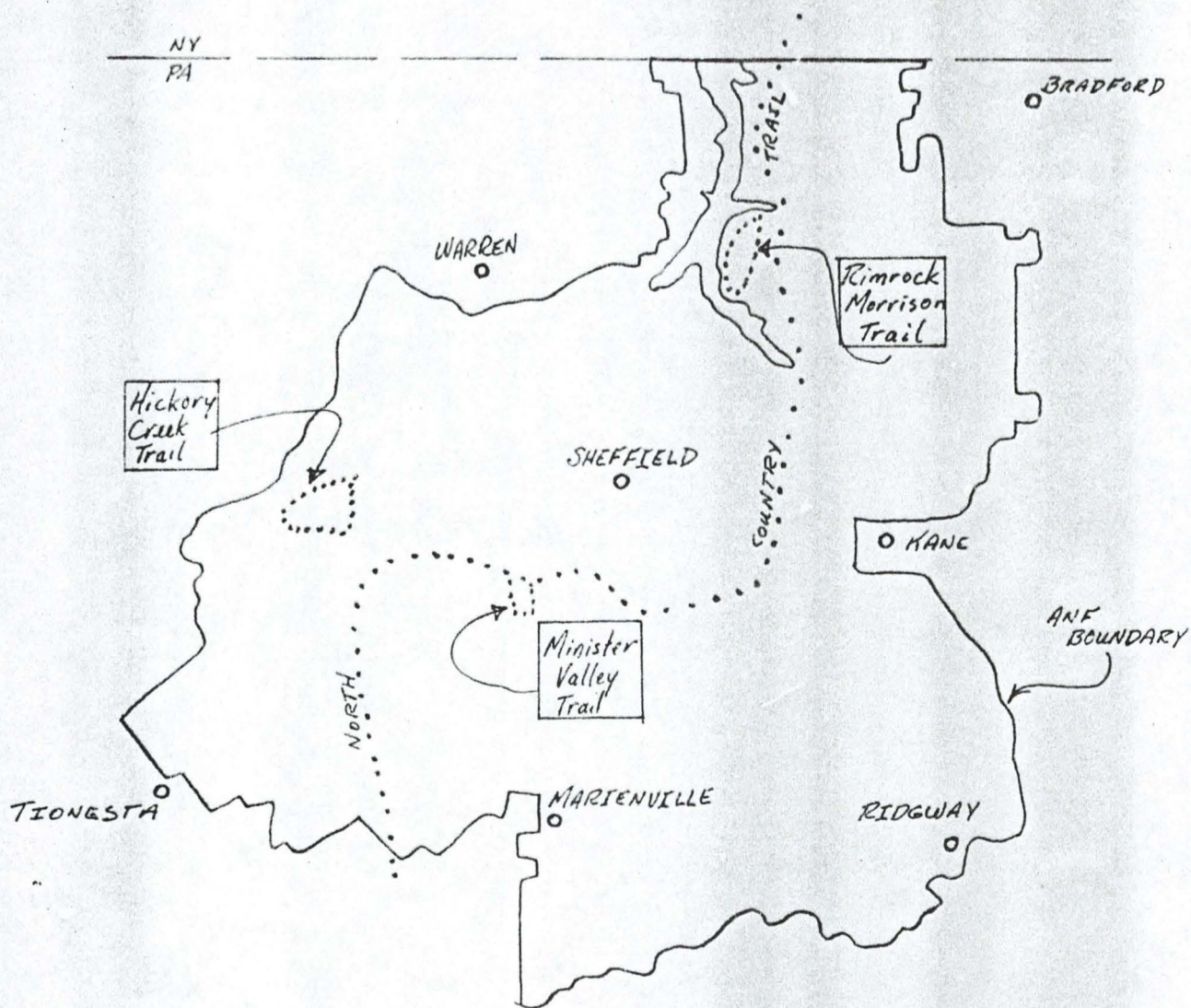


FIGURE 5



b. Short Length - Loops of 20 miles or less are ideal for people who prefer short trips of two or three days. These "long weekend" types of vacations have become more common than the two week excursions of the 1960's and 70's.<sup>1</sup> All the trails described above provide this type of hike.

c. Trailheads - Well defined trailheads are a part of each of these trails, and the more secure the parking, the more comfortable hikers feel about leaving their cars there.

d. Destinations - Each of these trails provide at least one destination such as a campground, overlook, or choice camping spot. For the Susquehannock Trail, some of these destinations also serve as supply points.

e. Natural Features - Steep terrain, rock formations, open meadows and a variety of trees and shrubs are part of the setting for all these trails. They also satisfy hiker's desires for water by following or providing views of streams along their route.

#### F. Alternative Ways to Improve Use of the NCT

Section D of this report lists five inherent problems with the NCT on the ANF. These are lack of status, lack of identity, cultural preferences, unfavorable media coverage, and physical location. While the first four problems are important, they are primarily the result of external factors that the Forest cannot easily influence. However, improving the NCT's physical setting is within the Forest's control and holds the most promise for increasing use of the trail. Also, if the Forest is successful at improving the popularity of the NCT, the effects of the other four factors can be reduced or eliminated.

If we focus on the attributes of other popular trails in the area and attempt to incorporate these attributes into the NCT system, two solutions become apparent: move the trail to a location where these attributes exist, or bring these attributes to the existing trail route. Relocating major portions of the trail to other areas of the Forest is not feasible and could violate the original Act which designated the NCT. It also would not completely eliminate the shortcomings. Therefore, the preferred method is to improve the existing trail route, with some minor adjustments in the route which are described below.

#### G. Guidelines for Improving the NCT

##### 1. ANF Forest Plan

The Allegheny's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) provides for 48 miles of new hiking trail this planning period (1986-1995). It also allows for recreational developments to be located to meet public demand. These two guidelines give managers on the ANF the opportunity to make the following improvements and additions to the NCT, which should ultimately increase hiking use.



## 2. Recommendations

- a. Create loop trails using sections of the NCT as part of the loop. Clearly identify the NCT section of each loop as part of the National Trails System. Design the loop trails for long-weekend hikes or day hikes (10-25 miles).
  - b. Provide side trails to support facilities like stores, campgrounds or even lodging. These can be incorporated into loops, but they don't have to be. Side trails provide a little civilization for hikers who need it, but don't detract from the long distance hikers who may prefer isolation.
  - c. Establish safe, accessible parking areas where people will not have to worry about leaving a vehicle. Combining parking with other support facilities has been the most successful on other popular trails. Trailheads associated with these parking areas can be located directly on the NCT or may connect with the main trail using side trails.
  - d. Incorporate destinations into the NCT system. This can be accomplished by re-locating sections of the trail or with side trails and loops leading to interesting features. Examples of things to feature at destinations include overlooks, hemlock groves or rock formations as well as campgrounds, supply points, or historical/archaeological sites. Attractive dispersed camping spots can also be incorporated or improved to be destination points. Another way to create destination points along the trail is to construct Adirondack shelters. In addition to providing a destination, shelters can also reduce the number of hikes that are cut short by rainy weather.
- To strengthen the concept of destinations into the NCT, the Allegany State Park in New York and Cook Forest State Park in Pennsylvania need to be part of the picture. The NCT enters these parks as it heads off the Allegheny National Forest to the north and south, and it is logical to incorporate destinations within these areas as part of the planning for trail system improvements.
- e. Relocate sections of the NCT to take advantage of more variable topography, vegetation, or scenery. These relocations will generally be within a few hundred feet of the original trail. Paths that provide glimpses of water or forest openings are preferred over those through monotonous terrain or vegetation.
  - f. Eliminate troublesome sections of trail that are usually wet or slippery. These include poorly-drained railroad grades, wet sidehills, or old woods roads with pockets of standing water. Some of these sections will need to be relocated while others can be corrected using corduroy, stepping stones or other means of "hardening" the tread.
  - g. Update maps and guides for the NCT. While the focus of this paper is on improving the physical characteristics of the NCT, any improvements that are not advertised with maps, guidebooks, or brochures will take a long time to be noticed. In addition, any changes in the trail system that are not clearly shown in up-to-date trail guides or maps could lead to confusion which could actually work against the objective of increasing use of the trail.



## H. Conclusion

Even though the 3,200 miles of the NCT is not likely to be completed in the near future, there are steps that the ANF can take to increase hiking use on the 93 miles of the trail within the Forest boundary. These steps involve physical changes and additions to the trail that are based on the demonstrated preferences of hikers on more popular trails.

While this report focuses on ways to improve the physical setting of the trail on the ANF, it also explains how lack of status, lack of a distinct identity, and unfavorable publicity for the ANF may have reduced the trail's popularity. By improving the setting, these other factors should become less significant for the Allegheny's section of the NCT.

It is important that the recommendations in this report be carefully coordinated with the individuals and groups who are currently interested in the trail, as well as potential hikers the Forest hopes to attract. Otherwise, managers will fall into the same trap of providing an experience that they think the hikers should like, rather than listening to the users and providing the experience that the hikers are really seeking.



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3. Author's personal experience.
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5. This is the Forest Service's system for implementing Forest Plans in Region 9, which includes the Allegheny National Forest.
6. USFS, "Allegheny National Forest Recreation Management Plan", p. 16, 1974.
7. Personal interview with Ronald Felton, retired Allegheny National Forest employee.
8. U.S. House of Representatives, "H.R. 1307", Section 2(ii), January 1979. Eventually became Public Law 96-199 in March of 1980.
9. Personal interview with Don Dorn, retired Forest Service employee and member of the Allegheny Outdoor Club.
10. Garreau, Joel, The Nine Nations of North America, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981, pp. 49-97.
11. Personal interview with Mark Goebel, Assistant Ranger, Bradford Ranger District, ANF.
12. USFS, "Allegheny National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan", p. 4-85, April 1986.

In addition to the references listed above, background for this report was also provided by the following persons who were interviewed:

1. Arnold Irvine - Assistant Ranger, Sheffield District, ANF
2. Terry Miller - Assistant Ranger, Marienville District, ANF
3. Ted Grisez - Allegheny Outdoor Club, Warren, PA
4. Don Clymer - Recreation Forester, SO, ANF, Warren, PA



J. Appendix

1. North Country Scenic Trail Act of 1979



3/21/79

H

96TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION**H. R. 1307**

To establish the North Country National Scenic Trail located in portions of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota, as a component of the National Trails System.

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**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

JANUARY 23, 1979

Mr. WHITEHURST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs

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**A BILL**

To establish the North Country National Scenic Trail located in portions of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota, as a component of the National Trails System.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*  
3 That this Act may be cited as the "North Country National  
4 Scenic Trail Act of 1979".

5 SEC. 2. There is hereby established as a component of  
6 the National Trails System, created by the Act of October 2,  
7 1968 (82 Stat. 919; 16 U.S.C. 1241), the North Country



1 National Scenic Trail, a corridor of approximately three  
2 thousand two hundred miles, extending from eastern New  
3 York State to the vicinity of Lake Sakakawea in North  
4 Dakota following the approximate route depicted on the map,  
5 identified as "Proposed North Country Trail—Vicinity Map"  
6 in the Department of the Interior North Country Trail  
7 Report dated June 1975: *Provided*, (i) that only those seg-  
8 ments of the corridor located within exterior boundaries of  
9 federally administered areas are established as the North  
10 Country National Scenic Trail by this Act; and (ii) that seg-  
11 ments outside of the exterior boundaries of federally adminis-  
12 tered areas may be established as part of the North Country  
13 National Scenic Trail upon application to the appropriate  
14 Secretary by the State or local governmental agencies or pri-  
15 vate interests involved if such segments meet the criteria es-  
16 tablished in the National Trails System Act and are adminis-  
17 tered by such agencies or interests without expense to the  
18 United States.

19 SEC. 3. Within three years after the date of enactment  
20 of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall select for the  
21 North Country National Scenic Trail a right-of-way, which  
22 shall be located within the corridor depicted on the map re-  
23 ferred to in section 2. The locations and the width of such  
24 rights-of-way across Federal lands under the jurisdiction of  
25 another Federal agency shall be by agreement between the



1 head of that agency and the appropriate Secretary. In select-  
2 ing the location and rights-of-way for non-Federal segments  
3 of the trail, the Secretary shall obtain the advice and assist-  
4 ance of the States, local governments, private organizations,  
5 and landowners and land users concerned. After the final  
6 route of the trail has been published in the Federal Register,  
7 the ten-mile wide planning corridor used in selecting that  
8 route shall cease to exist. The Secretary shall develop guide-  
9 lines for the acquisition, development, management, and  
10 maintenance of the trail with the advice and assistance of the  
11 Secretary of Agriculture and other Federal, State, and local  
12 agencies and organizations.

13 SEC. 4. The Secretary shall, within one year after the  
14 date of enactment of this Act, further study and report to the  
15 Congress his recommendations regarding the feasibility and  
16 desirability of establishing a connecting trail between the  
17 North Country National Scenic Trail authorized by this Act  
18 and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

19 SEC. 5. There are authorized to be appropriated such  
20 sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this  
21 Act.

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